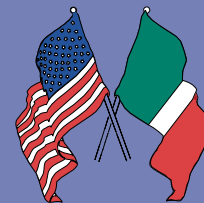




# NEW JERSEY ITALIAN AMERICAN HERITAGE COMMISSION



## Second Advisory Council Convocation Meets in Mercer County

**T**he second Advisory Council Convocation was held on Saturday, September 27, 2003, from 9:00 a.m. to noon, at the Mercer County Park Skating Rink in West Windsor. Representatives from Italian American organizations throughout the state joined with the Council in a call for unity. Richard Bilotti, Commissioner and chair of the Community Outreach Committee, stressed the Commission's dedication to inclusiveness and reiterated



*From left to right: N. Larry Paragano, Nazario Paragano, Eileen Poiani and Frank Gargione.*



*From left to right: Dr. Robert Freda, Dr. Gilda Rorro Baldassari, Patrick Morelli*



*From left to right: Joseph Coccia, Angelo Morresi and Michael Genevrino.*



*Advisory Council Co-chairs Frank Gargione and Eileen Poiani address the convocation.*

its goal of providing a unified framework for all the state's Italian American groups.

The Advisory Council, which provides statewide input to the New Jersey Italian American Heritage Commission, consists of representatives of New Jersey Italian American civic and social organizations that advocate and promote the cultural heritage of Italians and Italian Americans. Advisory co-chairs Frank Gargione and Eileen Poiani, hosts of the event, each spoke about the accomplishments of the Commission and addressed the need for input and support from organizations around the state.

Words of encouragement and support for the Commission's academic program were voiced by Giuseppina Vincitorio, representing the Italian Consulate's Education Office. The President of the Italian Teachers Association of New Jersey, Maria Papaleo, spoke of the recent adoption of Italian language studies as an officially recognized category in Advanced Placement testing.

Commissioner Angelo Morresi, chair of the Commission's Governmental Relations Committee, stressed the need to communicate with political leaders about the importance of the Commission and its achievements. The Chair of the Commission's Curriculum and Education Committee, Dr. Gilda Rorro Baldassari, presented the results of the group's hard

work: sample lesson plans that will integrate Italian language and culture study into the current curriculum. A recap of the Commission's recent activities was delivered by its Chairman, N. Larry Paragano.

Additional speakers included Patrick Morrelli, newly appointed Director of the Institute for Italian and Italian American Heritage Studies and Commissioner William Connell, Ph.D. The day ended with a festive lunch prepared by Angelo Peluso Catering and sponsored by The Trenton Times. The Bloomfield Mandolin Orchestra regaled guests with delicate renditions of both Italian and American favorites. The Commission's office manager, Gina Pezzicola, coordinated the day's activities.

Several attendees spoke during the public portion of the convocation. They included State Senator Peter Aversio, who encouraged the Commission in its work; Somerset County Surrogate Frank Bruno, who suggested that the Commission enhance its website to include more links to Italian American organizations; John Scarpati, President of the Mercer County Italian American Festival Association, who announced the renovation of the Mercer County Italian American Cultural Center; and Mariuccia Romano, Director of the Scuola e Coro d'Italia, who stressed the importance of maintaining our rich cultural and artistic heritage.



## Chairman's Message

**A**s we celebrate our Italian heritage this season and honor the extraordinary men and women who arrived at these shores before us, we consider where we have been and where we are going. The year 1492 saw the death of the great Lorenzo di Medici and the end of the early Renaissance as well as the dawning of the age of discovery. In order to arrive in the "New World," Columbus had to leave the Old.

The New Jersey Italian and Italian American Heritage Commission has as one of its core goals a desire to create a unified framework for all the Italian American organizations in the state. While preserving their unique character, the groups can take advantage of the benefits of aligning with a state mandated institute. With that goal in mind, representatives of many of these organizations attended the recent Convocation hosted by the Commission on September 27, 2003, and discussed:

- Expanding the Commission's web-



**IAHC President N. Larry Paragano addresses March 8 convocation.**

site to include links with other Italian and Italian American organizations, thereby creating a greater awareness of their achievements and all future events.

- Forming a Speakers' Bureau to travel throughout the state bringing the message of our past successes and our goals for the future.

- Continued development of our curriculum program for the teaching of Italian language and studies in grades K-12.

Though the waters are uncharted, we urge you to sail with us on this voyage and help us create a new order. Lend your time, your opinion, your expertise, your financial support, your organization's resources, to the Commission. Contact:

New Jersey Italian and Italian  
American Heritage Commission  
Rutgers, The State University of NJ

## Hats Off To:

Commissioner Salvatore A. Davino, who will be honored by The Columbus Hospital Foundation at its annual "Enchanted Evening Gala" on Saturday, November 15, at Nanina's in the Park in Belleville. Sal is being honored for his many years of service to the hospital, having served on its Board of Trustees since 1986.

- Advisory Council Co-chair Eileen Poiani, who was among the Nutley Hall of Fame's first inductees, along with eight other distinguished Nutley residents. Eileen was valedictorian of her class at Nutley High School and an honors graduate of Douglass College. She received a Ph.D. in mathematics from Rutgers University and is currently a full professor of mathematics and the Vice President for Student Affairs at St. Peter's College.

- Commissioner Peter Cocozziello, who this summer was bestowed the prestigious Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year Award in the real estate category. Peter is the founder and president of Advance Realty Company, one of the largest privately-held companies of its kind in the country.

- Patrick Morelli, newly appointed Director for the Institute for Italian and

## News from Board of Academic Advisers

**T**his fall the Commission, at the request of the Board of Academic Advisers, co-sponsored the following events:

- "History and Fiction in Dante," a public lecture by Claudia Giunta, Associate Professor, University of Trento, Italy, presented on September 23, at Seton Hall University.

- The Italian Graduate Society's 2003 Conference, "Tempting Sin, Attempting Virtue," a two-day series of lectures and group discussions dealing with moral issues and themes in Italian culture as selected in literature, held on October 18 and 19 at The Eagleton Institute. Distinguished speakers include Paolo

Valesio of Yale University and Lina Bolzoni of the Scuola Normale di Pisa.

- A series of lectures and presentations on Italians in America at Camden County College:

- "The Italian-American Immigrant Experience in the Early 20th Century," presented on October 1.

- "Sacco-Vanzetti Case Revisited," on October 8.

- "Lynchings, Race and Italian Immigrants as 'In-Between' White and Black," on October 15.

- "Portrayal of Italian Americans in Contemporary Media," on October 22.

- "The Sopranos and the Image of Italian Americans: Ethnic Stereotyping or



**Board of Academic Advisers Chairperson William Connell (c.), with Richard Billotti (l.) and Angelo Morresi at the September 27 Convocation**

Reality?," on October 23.

- "Italian Americans in the Labor Movement: The Paterson Silk Strike of 1913 and the Newark Teachers' Strikes of the 1970s," on October 29.

- "Expressions of Ethnic Identity – Public and Private Lives of Italian Americans," on November 5.





# Higher Education Committee Update

**T**he Higher Education Committee has been working on several projects.

The Community Education Presentation is a one-hour presentation designed to stimulate public interest in the Italian language and Italian and Italian American cultures, heritage and history. This presentation will be made available to Italian American civic, social and educational organizations, and others, in three formats: an oral presentation by a trained individual (graduate student assistants, educators); a CD; and an online downloadable version.

NIAF Teach the Teachers Day, a day-long workshop for the professional advancement of Italian teachers, is being held on June 5, 2004, at Montclair State University. Based on the recognized statewide need for qualified teachers of the Italian language, and in appreciation of the remarkable work currently being done by Italian language educators in New Jersey, the workshop is being offered in collaboration with the National Italian American Foundation, the American Association of Teachers of Italian, and the Italian Teachers

Association of New Jersey, and Montclair State University. Teachers will receive six professional advancement hours for attending the workshop.

ITANJ Italian Annual Heritage Day and Summer Scholarship Program: Each year the Italian Teachers Association of NJ, a chapter of the American Association of Teachers of Italian, organizes an Italian Heritage Day for students of Italian in New Jersey. The next one is scheduled for March 25/26 at Rutgers University with the

theme of "La gastronomia nel cinema e nella musica." Students have, in the past, been asked to pay a registration fee, but the Committee is requesting that the Institute cover incidental expenses and spare students the expense.

Program objectives include:

- To promote the study of Italian and Italian American culture;
- To give Italian students a forum to demonstrate their accomplishments;
- To provide educators and their students an opportunity to meet, exchange ideas, and to socialize outside the classroom;



**Marisa Trubiano addresses March 8 convocation.**

# Curriculum Plans Move Forward

The Curriculum Development Committee, chaired by Dr. Rorro Baldasarri, has been busy meeting with curriculum writers and committee members at the New Jersey State Department of Education. The Committee is developing a Curriculum Infusion Model consisting of teacher and student-friendly lesson plans for integrating Italian and Italian American studies into grades K-12 curricula.

The model will be disseminated to

pilot districts in the near future where the schools and their corresponding communities will be trained on the use of the curriculum.



**Maria Papaleo, President of the New Jersey Teachers of Italian.**

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S CORNER



**Robert Freda  
Executive Director**

**W**hat do you mean when you think about Italian and Italian American heritage? Whom do you think should be involved in the work of the New Jersey Italian and Italian American Heritage Commission and why?

Several years ago, when the first notion of having such a Commission emerged and I was invited to get involved, I thought I knew something about Italian and Italian American heritage. As 2003 draws to an end, I can tell you that I have learned more new information about his rich and diverse heritage and the peoples that are behind it in the past several years than I had accumulated in the previous sixty-two.

For many Italian Americans, their knowledge of this heritage is based primarily on what they experienced in their homes and neighborhoods. As descendants of poor immigrants, often from south Italy, whose customs, traditions and dialects reflected an often charming and nostalgic picture of Italy based on the small rural villages, this understanding was limited and incomplete. Others, with the same kind of parentage, once here, were fortunate enough to have more education and the economics to either study or travel to Italy to improve their understanding. Yet others coming from more educated and already successful Italian family backgrounds had understandings that were more thorough in terms of the geography, history, and multi-cultured regions of Italy.

As millions of people, from all sorts of ethnic backgrounds in the USA struggle to retain or recapture their heritage, the challenge for Italian Americans is perhaps even greater. Many New Jerseyans of Italian heritage express strong and divergent opinions of what is and what is not important to remember about Italian and Italian American heritage. In addition, there are as many differences of opinion as to what are the best ways to educate others and ourselves about who and what the heritage is all about.

## Commission Officer Spreads Word of the Italian and Italian American Heritage Commission in Italy

**T**he Commission's Secretary/Treasurer, Dr. Gilda Rorro Baldassari, returned from a trip to Italy in July where she met with mayors and their designees in three locales. The purpose was to acquaint the community leaders with the mission and goals of the Commission.

Rorro Baldassari met with Mayor Monteleone of Margherita Di Savoia in Foggia, the place where her father was born. The mayor was most interested in learning about the existence of the Commission and its activities, especially the Curriculum Development Project. Margherita Di Savoia is a center for salt production and exportation throughout Europe and the Middle East. It also exports to the United States. Dr. Rorro Baldassari is writing a lesson plan on the topic of salt from Roman times to the present and, of course, will include information on this region of the Mezzogiorno.

Princeton, New Jersey, has a "Sister City" relationship (gemellaggio) with the



*Dr. Gilda Rorro Baldassari with Mayor or Margherita di Savoia, Ingengiero Salvatore Camporeale.*

town of Pettoranello, Isernia, in the region of Molise, Italy. A part of its cultural exchange is in the field of music. Princeton has hosted a young music director, Mr. Fernando Raucci, to conduct the Greater Princeton Youth Orchestra. Maestro Raucci will begin his sixth year as conductor of the group.

Maestro Raucci invited Dr. Rorro Baldassari to his home in Isernia, and later, to Pettoranello, where she met with the

The New Jersey Institute of Italian and Italian-American Heritage, located at Rutgers the State University in New Brunswick, is the operational body of New Jersey Italian and Italian-American Heritage Commission for program implementation and administration. The Commission, located in, but not of, The New Jersey Department of Education, was created pursuant to the enactment of P.L. 2001 Chapter 343 C. 18A4-42 and signed into law January 2002. The Institute, a 501(c) entity with statewide jurisdiction, is charged with providing services to the public at large as well as public, nonprofit and other public service institutions in all twenty-one counties.

**NJ-IIAHS**  
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